Aircraft employee ratio in IA

*226. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Airlines plans to shed 7,000 personnel as a cost saving measure to bring its aircraft employee ratio down to international standards;

(b) whether the ratio will still be double of what it is in Singapore Airlines where the ratio is as low as 161 per aircraft; and

(c) if so, in what manner the airlines plans to achieve this and what is the time-frame for its completion?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) to (c) the staff strength of India Airlines including Alliance Air (a wholly owned subsidiary of Indian Airlines) as on 31st May, 2002 is 20,605. with the current strength of 57 aircraft, the aircraft/employee ratio is 1:361. This ratio is normally not comparable with other international airlines as the requirement of the employees varies from airlines to airline, and it also depends on extent of operation, nature of fleet and activities undertaken directly;

There is present no proposal to shed 7000 personnel to bring down the aircraft/employee ratio. Indian Airlines has, however, taken various steps to contain its manpower by freezing fresh recruitment in non-operational categories and rolling back retirement age from 60 to 58 years and is also considering introducing a Voluntary Retirement Scheme.

Relocation of petrol pumps on highways

*227. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned 'Oil Companies National Highway Authority of India at loggerheads over relocating pumps on highways' which appeared in the Indian Express dated 25th June, 2002;

(b) whether oil companies have expressed their difficulties to relocate the existing pumps as it will imply an expenditure of anything between Rs.25 lakhs to Rs.2 crores for each pump;

(c) whether Government had convened a meeting on 5th July, 2002 with National Highways Authority of India in which oil companies were also present; and

(d) if so, the decision taken in the meeting?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (d) To discuss various issues, inter-ministerial consultations were done by Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MORTH). Different aspects including problems relating to the existing retail outlets on the highways as well as the future retail outlets, that may be set up along the Highways, have been discussed. A broad agreement, *Inter-alia*, has been reached as follows:—

(i) All fuel stations set up after 1983 must fulfill all the norms set out in MORTH's circular of August, 2000 and Indian Roads Congress code IRC:12:1983.

(ii) Pre-1983 fuel stations to be identified along with their deficiencies with reference to the existing norms and IRC:12:1983 to take a view on their rectifications.

(iii) wherever there is clustering of fuel stations, service road along with deceleration and acceleration lanes would be provided by the oil companies.

(iv) Oil Industry to apply for lease/licence for the approach road from the National Highway to the fuel station and the licence fee for the existing fuel station shall be as per the existing norms.

(v) Fuel stations falling within the municipal limits to follow the municipal rules, petroleum rules and MORTH's norms.

For future retail outlets, norms are yet to be finalized.

Reduction in plane fare for Tripura

*228. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of aircraft flying from Agartala to Kolkata in a week;